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April 16 2008 Meeting Minutes

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes - Final **April 16, 2008**

Present: Marlissa Briggett, Christine Carney, Vita Cohen, Vice Chair, Jorge Loayza, Nick Minton, Chair, Nancy Rhoads, Marlene Schultz, Bill Shea, Nancy Sweeney

Absent: Sheri Baron, Christine Deshler

Chair Minton thanked Vice Chair Cohen for chairing April meeting in his absence.

Open Forum:

Stacy Davidson, Diversity Task Group, came to observe our meeting this evening.

Also, a resident came to discuss an incident at Colonial Village. Vice Chair Cohen explained the complaint process to her and told her the Commission will inform her of the decision as soon as possible.

Review of March Minutes – Minutes accepted as amended

Race and Place Dialogue Series Update – Chair Minton and Commissioner Carney attended the presentation by Laura Weiner (Arlington Affordable Housing) and reported that the presentation, which is a four part video series, was quite good but are concerned if it is suitable for everyone. As the intense program is presently in the planning stage Ms Weiner is looking for people to be involved to see if Arlington wants to be a part of it. They will continue to give updates as the program evolves.

Networks and Coalitions –

Arlington Common Threads – (ACT) – Commissioners Schultz and Cohen reported that the Selectmen endorsed the new program and that an article will be in the Advocate seeking interested people to join the program. Commissioner Cohen would like to reach out to the clergy in town and discussed how they could be more involved and start by working on the mailing list compiled from the Campaign for Understanding last year. It was also suggested that the Rapid Response program that is already in place would be a good subject to discuss with the clergy and begin by asking if they know about the program and what their understanding is of the program and work from there. Commissioner Cohen asked for all Commissioners to get in touch with her or Commissioner Schultz on any thoughts they might have and suggested mailing a copy of the AHRC Annual Report to those on the Rapid Response list. More to follow.

MAHRC update – Commissioner Sweeney was unable to attend recent meeting but did speak of the Multi Cultural Network in Winchester.

Incident and Complaints –

Colonial Village incident - Chair Minton moved that we find jurisdiction of this case and there was a unanimous decision to accept the move. Commissioners Rhoads, Shea and Sweeney will serve as the subcommittee and work with the complainant.

(please turn over page)

A meeting date will be set up and the Request to Respondent for Position Statement and Notice of Fact Finding Conference will be

sent by certified mail to all involved in this complaint.

Summer Street audible signals – Commissioner Cohen met with Barbara Jones of the Disabilities Commission who reported that she does not want mediation regarding her recent complaint. Commissioner Shea reported that the signals are very loud and would like to go to the Transportation Advisory Commission. Commissioner Cohen will keep us posted on the progress of the signal problem.

Subcommittee Reports –

Dialogues – the Armenian Genocide Dialogue was very well received – the planning committee will continue to work on programs for next year.

Schools – disappointment was expressed regarding graffiti posted around the High School – Principal Skidmore denounced the incident – there will be a meeting with METCO parents who do not want to make a big deal of the incident – concern was expressed as to why the HRC was not notified and question of whether it was ever reported to the APD. A motion was made to gather more facts. Commissioner Shea will speak with the APD and Commissioner Sweeney will speak with the school department. The Commissioner took no formal position tonight.

Policies and Procedures – no report this month

Rapid Response/Publicity – Commissioner Rhoads ordered laminated signs for town playground bulletin boards explaining the work of the AHRC.

Other Business –

There was discussion of the budget balance.

MLK Committee sent thanks for support of their annual event.

Notice will be sent to Town Manager and School Committee of seat vacancies that need to be appointed to the Commission.

Commissioner Carney moved to adjourn. Commissioner Briggett seconded. The meeting was concluded.

*Submitted by:
Marylynn Carnell
Staff Assistant*